

# St. Joseph's Secondary School, Newsletter

HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER

EDITION 1  
2020/2021



## Launch of Major Building extension

Work is currently under way on a major extension to our school. €2.4 million was allocated by the Department of Education and Skills for the construction of seven mainstream classrooms, a new purpose built home economics room, new toilet facilities, additional circulation area and a new link corridor to the existing main building.

Works are expected to be completed by next summer - ready for the start of the new academic year in September 2021. This major extension is being built to the highest building specification and energy requirements will greatly enhance the teaching and learning of the 600 students in the school.

## Dates to note for 2021

**January 6<sup>th</sup>:** School Reopens

**January 28<sup>th</sup>:** Enrolment Evening 2021/2022

**February 1<sup>st</sup> -** Leaving Cert. Mocks commence

**February 5<sup>th</sup> -** Junior Cycle Mocks commence

**Mid-term Break: Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February**

**March 17<sup>th</sup>** Public Holiday – School Closed

**Easter Holidays: Monday 29<sup>th</sup>**

**March – Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April**

**April 12<sup>th</sup>** School Reopens.

**May 3<sup>rd</sup>** Public Holiday - School Closed

**May 13<sup>th</sup>** Celebration of Student Achievements

**May 26<sup>th</sup>** Leaving Cert. Graduation Ceremony.

**May 27<sup>th</sup>** T.Y. Graduation Ceremony

**June 1<sup>st</sup> – Fri 4<sup>th</sup>** In House Examinations

**June 4<sup>th</sup> -** End of School Year

**June 9<sup>th</sup>** State Exams commence

Available on the **App Store** [Download our APP](#)



St. Joseph's crib - Christmas 2020

## Welcome

We would like to welcome our first year students and their families to our school community. We hope they are settling into their new learning environment and we wish them well.



Thirty two 5<sup>th</sup> year students and six 2<sup>nd</sup> year students received their **Bronze Gaisce Award** recently. Gaisce conducted a pilot scheme for 2<sup>nd</sup> years last year and our students are among the first in the country to achieve the Bronze Award at such a young age. Well done on a fantastic achievement to the girls and their teacher Ms O'Toole!

## Credit Union Art Competition 2020 – Winners Local/School level

**Roisin Ikele** - 1<sup>st</sup> prize 14-17 year age category

**Kayleigh Rice** - 1<sup>st</sup> prize 18 years & over age category

**Alison Ryan** - 2<sup>nd</sup> prize 18 years & over age category

**Ugne Budreckyte** - 3<sup>rd</sup> prize 18 years & over age category

**Kayleigh Rice** goes forward to next stage of the competition - **Chapter Level**



## Debating Success

Two Transition Year students are through to the final of the Mayo Schools, Dublin Senior Debating Competition. Eimear Cunningham and Áine Fox spoke powerfully and eloquently in the Debate semi-final on the motion that Voting should be Mandatory in Ireland.

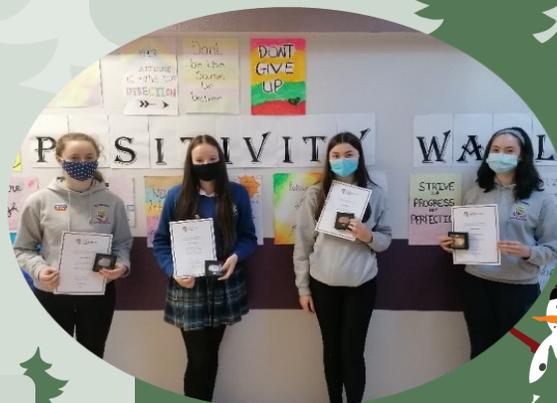
The motion for the final is 'That this house believes that the high point of Trumpism has passed.'  
We wish Eimear and Áine the best of luck in the final! Well done to both and to their teacher Ms. O'Toole



## Credit Union Art Competition Local/School Level Winners



## Gaisce Bronze Awards



## Student Council - By Eimear Cunningham

There are 24 students on this year's Student Council. Each representative was chosen by their class. At the first meeting, officers were elected. Julianna Aitken and Orla Kelleher are Co-Chairpersons this year. Lucy McHugh is Treasurer, Abbie Duffy is Secretary and Sarah Cashin is Public Relation Officer. The Student Council discuss ideas brought to them from their classmates. This year it was decided that each class representative would create a mini Covid committee for their class to ensure correct practice of the Covid guidelines for the school. On Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December, each year group will watch a pantomime for schools called the 'Sword in the Stone' put on by The Helix theatre. This event is coordinated by the Student Council. The annual Festive Non-Uniform Day will also take place on this day, proceeds from this fundraiser will go towards the local 'Meals on Wheels'. The Student Council is working on creating more Covid-19 friendly activities and fundraisers for the New Year.

### Student Council Members

**First Years:** Casie Corrigan (1A) Laura Beirne (1B) Lily Kelly (1C)

**Second Years:** Alannah Kelly (1A) Zaynab Akon (2B) Chinonye Madu (2C) Glory Isaac (2D)

**Third Years:** Aisling Cresham (3A) Caoimhe Doherty (3B) Nora Fallon (3C) Kayleigh Kearns (3D)

**Transition Years:** Leah Gibbons (TYA) Eimear Cunningham (TYB) Lara Shaughnessy (TYC) Sarah Cashin (TYD)

**Fifth Years:** Abbie Duffy (5A) Deirbhile Ruane (5B) Lucy McHugh (5C) Áoibhe Horan (5D)

**Sixth Years:** Kate Coffey (6A) Orla Kelleher (6B) Caoimhe Ward (6C) Simi Akinsuline (6D) Julianna Aitken (6E)



### Mentors Programme - By Emer Beirne

This year twenty-seven fifth year students are taking part in the mentor programme.

The mentors gather on Wednesdays with the first years at lunch to discuss topics of interest to them such as study, exams and settling into life in first year.

The first term was finished off with hot chocolate and scary movies! This term started with a table quiz and soon got into Christmas mode watching favourite Christmas advertisements from over the years and clips of "The Late Late Toy Show". The mentors are looking forward to lots of other activities in the new year.

This term and this memorable year will be finished off with another hot chocolate morning, everybody's favourite activity!



## Religion Department News

The restrictions of Covid-19 have had a huge impact on the liturgical life within the school community. It meant that the Opening of school year mass could not take place on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September to mark Mercy Day. We still found a way to acknowledge this significant day in our school calendar with a beautiful reflection and song on the school intercom. During this time students and staff put aside their classwork as the whole school community paused and took some time out to remember Sr. Catherine Mac Auley and the Mercy ethos and values.

For the month of November, a tree of remembrance was created in the Sacred Space. All students and staff were invited to write the names of deceased family members and friends on a leaf and place it on the tree. Each class then had a prayer service where, through word and music, they prayed and remembered their loved ones. The tree remains in place as a memory tree for Christmas.

Other liturgical moments like the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the school Carol service which once again brought the whole school together to sing carols and retell the Christmas story could not happen this year. However, we look forward to Advent and Christmas 2021 where once again the beautiful sounds of Silent Night and other Christmas airs will be sung by our many school choirs.

Finally this Christmas, we remember our former school chaplain, Rev Fr. John Mc Cormack who sadly passed away last March. John was a huge part of the Liturgical life of our school and his presence is truly missed by everyone during this academic year. We remember Fr. John in our thoughts and prayers this Advent and Christmas.

### November Memory Tree



### TYB Mini Company

Over the past month, the students from TYB have been working very hard creating a mini company for the festive season. The project is called 'Santa's Spotify Surprise'. TYB will be selling Christmas goodie bags containing sweet treats, handmade Christmas decorations and Spotify codes that can be scanned to listen to one of your favourite Christmas hits! The bags will be on sale during the month of December for €3 each. A raffle will be held before the holidays. There are many great prizes including a €25 one for all voucher, a Gobble Gobble Treats T set, GRG sports gear and many other special goodies kindly sponsored by local businesses.

You know what they say "if you're not in you can't win!!". A Spotify code will act as the raffle ticket so it must be kept safe. Instructions on how to scan the Spotify code can be found on Instagram - **Santaspotifysurprise** or on the TV in reception. All proceeds go towards Rockrose House, a Mayo cancer support association based in Castlebar. TYB are delighted to be helping them out this year, and are delighted to be supporting local businesses also.

## TY Musical Awards

Last year TY students staged the musical 'All Shook Up' in the TF Royal Theatre. They performed to a packed theatre and received standing ovations each night! They entered a national competition, 'Stagewise School Musical Awards' and an adjudicator attended the show. As a result, we received 7 nominations which was an excellent achievement. Congrats to all involved!



Nominations were as follows .....

- 1) **Best Comedienne** - Katie O'Reilly
- 2) **Best Actress in a supporting role** - Charlotte Redmond
- 3) **Best Actress** - Deirbhile Ruane
- 4) **Best Actress** - Laoise Murphy
- 5) **Best Musical Director** - Ms Deirdre Lee
- 6) **Best Orchestra**
- 7) **Best Programme**

The Certificates recently arrived to the school and were presented to the students, now 5th years, in early December.



*Pictured with their certificates  
From back left to right: Charlotte Redmond, Katie O'Reilly, Laoise Murphy, Deirbhile Ruane*

## Cellos presented to St. Joseph's Music Department

St. Joseph's Music Department have been very kindly presented with 6 Cellos by Con Lavelle and his daughter Maeve, a past pupil of St. Joseph's. Con plays the cello with Mayo Concert Orchestra and is hoping that our students will enjoy playing this great instrument as much as he does! Ms Lee, Ms Durcan and all Music students are delighted and extremely grateful to both Con and Maeve for this very generous donation! We look forward to many future Cello recitals in our school!

## Elf on the shelf!



Keep an eye out for Eddie the Elf who has joined St. Joseph's for the month of December - he is usually up to some bit of mischief around the reception area! Thanks to Eimear Cunningham for making his mask. Eimear has supplied lots of masks to students this year and we commend her work and talent.

## TY - The year so far .....

By Rachel Healy

Although this year has been very different to the other years of TY, TYs have definitely made the best out of a bad situation!! The year started off with a day trip to Killary where the girls participated in many different activities that brought them closer together as a year group. They continued on through the term with many different workshops both on Zoom and onsite, including workshops on Breast Awareness, Forensics, Sign Language and Young SVP. TYB began their mini company in October to raise funds for Rockrose house. They are selling Christmas goodie bags for the festive season and are holding a raffle next week. The Christmas Cake Home Economics project didn't fail to get everyone into the Christmas spirit, the cakes certainly let everyone's artistic side shine through. They will be presented next Wednesday. The

Irish classes toured the town last week to find street names, shops and signs as Gaeilge and took pictures of them. As part of the TY modules- Future Leaders and YSI (Young Social Innovators) the girls participated in many activities including: coaching second years, learning about nutrition as part of the Future Leaders program, making scarves and sending letters to our neighbours in Cuan Caitriona as part of YSI.



### TYs Investigate fluvial changes in local river

TYB and TYC Geography classes with their teacher Mr O'Tuathail visited the Castlebar River at Lough Lannagh on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The aim of the field study was to investigate the fluvial changes as you travel downstream in the river. Data was collected and recorded on site and compiled into tables and graphs back in the classroom. This trip was a fun and educational experience for all.

### Proactive TYs engage with local issues.....

TY students with their teacher, Mr Maguire have started their research and investigation on the N5 Carriageway. Some of these students have been personally affected by the planning and ongoing work. They will be taking photographs, interviewing relevant parties and creating a feature length article in the coming months. This is a great opportunity for the students to engage with local issues, inform people of what's going on as well as putting it together in an educational context.



## TY Christmas cakes - By Sophie Ralph

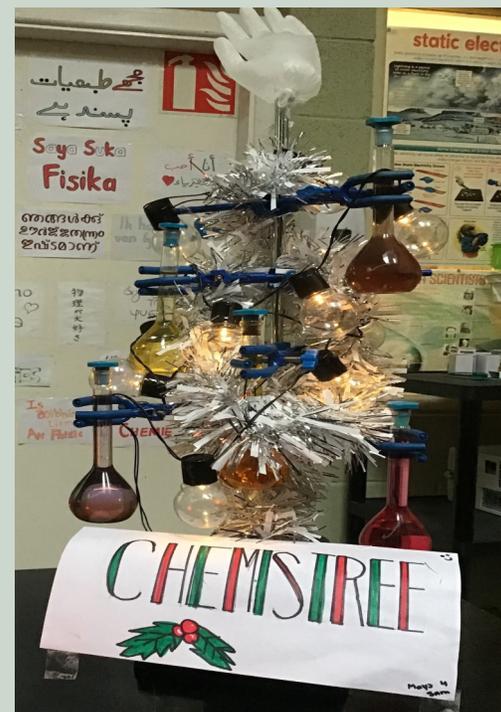
Over the past few weeks, TY students have been working on their Christmas Cakes. Everyone used their creative skills to ice and decorate their cake. The cakes will be displayed on Wednesday 16th December and Aaron Mc Mahon from the local Café Rua will be the judge to select the best cake. We hope that he will be impressed. We would like to thank Aaron for his annual sponsorship of this event.



**Emily Madigan** who picked up third place for her spiced sponge cake

Congratulations to Emily Madigan who came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Senior competition of 'Kenwood Young Baker'. Emily impressed the judges with her Spiced Sponge cake with added orange & ginger zest, paired with a maple flavoured buttercream. Well done Emily!

**Bringing the festive spirit into Chemistry class!**



**Fusion of Chemistry and Christmas!**  
An environmentally friendly, colourful and clever creation by Chemistry teacher, Mr Mac Monagle

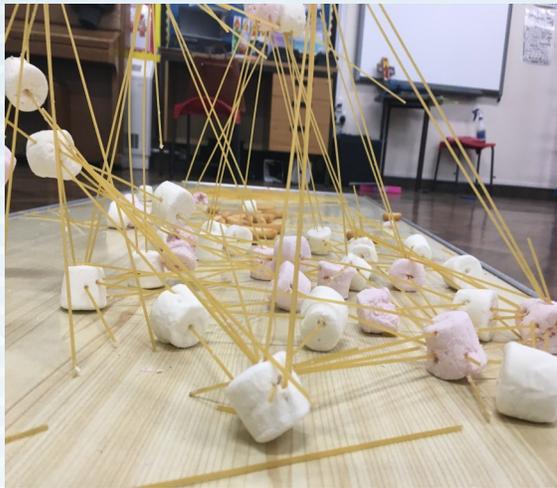


TY Christmas cakes



TYB Mini Company





### Science Week Challenge – Building Marshmallow towers!

As part of science week, the task was to build the highest tower using spaghetti and marshmallows. Exploring the forces that act on buildings - tension, compression and load, students and staff took on the role of engineers. For some the load was just too much! – however the tallest student tower reached a height of 56cm and staff won the challenge with a tower measuring in at 64cm. Well done to everyone who took part!

TY students and teacher Ms O'Malley added a splash of colour to the school for Halloween, carving out pumpkins in Science class. Some excellent faces, staying safe also, some pumpkins wearing a mask!



### Partaking in Certified Irish Angus Competition

3 TY students - Lucy Fitzgerald, Emma Kelly and Emma Gallagher have entered a competition run by Certified Irish Angus. The girls had to put together a 4 minute video on Agricultural Science in our school, information about themselves, their plan to promote the Irish Angus breed and to highlight the impact of their sponsors ABP and Kepak.

### Modelling good behaviour - a Covid19 compliant pumpkin!





### 3 National Finalists in Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge

Congratulations to Anabel Schafer (German student who was in TY in St. Joseph's last year), Ann Sibi and Norah Doyle who recently received their National Finalist certificates. Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge is an international competition which challenges student's computational thinking. Over 6,000 students took part in the challenge so it was a huge achievement to have qualified for the National Final. The 3 girls scored exceptionally high and were in with a real chance of proceeding to the International Finals but unfortunately Covid 19 intervened. Well done to the girls and their teacher Ms Calvey.



### Tennis scholarship for Róisín

Congratulations to Róisín Murphy who has been awarded a tennis scholarship to attend Mercyhurst University Pennsylvania, USA for September 2021. Mercyhurst has an excellent academic programme and they have a very well renowned women's tennis team. Róisín is looking forward to attending there next year and to competing on the tennis team. Well done Róisín!



The community of St. Joseph's would like to wish you all a very happy, healthy and safe Christmas and best wishes for 2021!

